Dear Howard, 8/17/72

I guess it is good that I had to take Lil into town after responding to Gary's letter that came today. Its unconscious revelations and the indications of as yet undisclosed somethingor other are truly shcoking, much more so that I had anticipated the worst to be. There is none of his story that is true, not a single bit, and that I never expected. He supplied the disproof, as you will see.

In a sense, having it this overwhelming is a relief to me as it is a greater blow to Lil, who wanted me to stop when she learned I was writing him. She came and asked me what I was doing because it is unlike me not to open all the mail and then decide what to do. It was unusually late and unusually heavy today. I was sitting next to her, opened a letter from a doctor, gave it to her, then opened Gary's, and got up and made immediate response. Her comment came after she read the letter, for even to her some of it was false. We apparently also talked in front of her, which I didn't remember. What plagued me is that perhaps Gary had forgotten everything except that he knew this was my work and that I didn't want it used. Now there can be innocence in no area, and I'll not be troubled by even the remotest possibility of my being harsh, etc.

As you know, I have not been making distribution of what I've been writing, xcept that you have most of it. In this case I have sent a copy to a friend not a "critic", unknown to you, a copy for myself, and the one I intended for you. As I got toward the end I wondered if for the reasons indicated I should send Mary a copy, and when I finished I decided I should. So, the copy for you I've sent to her, asking that she forward it to you. It has all the attachments, meaning the two enclosures and his letter. I also sent her, for indicated reasons, the envelope.

Close examination of the page from the inventory would disclose something but I'm not going to make it. The densities are off, far off, as they are not and never are if made from a copy that is a clear copy of a xerox made from an original ribbin copy of Archives creation. They are not as cheap as Rankin. They use good ribbons.

If you think after reading all of it that I was unkind or excessive, it will be too late, but I'd like to know. You may see what I didn't, for as I saidm I read it once and sat down and replied immediately, stopping only when interrupted by the phone and lunch, which I extended for a bit of relief. This was necessary because Gary was special to us.

The only restriction I placed upon Mary is the only one I place upon you: nothing to hurt him personally. Whatever else you say or do not say about fact is of no concern to me, nor is it to whom you do or do not make it. My concern is with intent only. What he has done is what he must live with, and that you can't change. I do think at the least Dick should know. It might be a bit much for Sylvia or might help her out of what must be a bad time. If yyou decide to do nothigg with her and have any advice for me, give it. I do think she should know and I think it would be less disagreeable from almost anyone else.

It is going on 8 p.m. A new shopping center opened and we did some window shopping on the way home, picked up some free snap-closed plastic bags she can use for carrying knitting, wished a few business friends there well in their new and expensive ventures, and I have not yet read all the mail, including that from James Ray.

So, until you see the copies of what he himself wrote, from which I'll not take the edge, you have my word and my caution: he destroyed any alibi he might have had and claimed to. He asked for what is not in the inventory and used knowledge he got from me only. That should ne enough to hold you and, I hope, satify you about him as well as Jerry. And the copy he sent me of the oage from the inventory-I asked for the first page, remember- and their letter to him telling him about it-neither received or acknowledged -and he sent the page os the listing. It was made on a machine that cuts its own paper, not a standard size supply but from a roll. I know of only one that any critic has or has access to, and that is in an office that had already misued my materials. Paranoid enough?

I would add but one thing, believeing at this point and with this record, that the very few of us doing any work work together on a need-to-know basis with others. I have already, for the first time, stopped sending Hoch automatically all my Srchives correspondence. He doesn't send me all of his, just some, but I've never deviated. What I last sent you or is enclosed he is not getting, and I've told him he won't until I have the assurance I want and explicitly as ~~xxxxxxx~~ I want it. When these bastards have nothing to steal they'll be out of ti entirely and until then I'll proceed on a different basis, as you will soon see when I have time to catch up on what I made the first effort toward Tuesday. Henceforth the agencies will deliver directly to me or I'll go to court or I'll drop it, and I'll be making it explicit enough. Best,